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THE CARAVANS

HORACE DUMONT HERR

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THE CARAVANS

THE CARAVANS

BY

HORACE DUMONT HERR

Author of *Country and River-Side Poems,*
Babe of Bethlehem and Man of Galilee,
The Palmer, The Tenters, etc.

—"not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

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INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

It is now not far from fifty years since the writer of this sketch was — to use the old fashioned expression — "converted" in a United Brethren "revival meeting" held in Indiana, in a little cross-roads church known as West Fork Chapel.

Feeling drawn to the ministry, and encouraged by Christian friends, he soon began timid attempts at speaking in some of the country and village churches, such as those of West Fork, New Lisbon, and Dublin.

Subsequently he entered the theological seminary at Dayton, Ohio. Having graduated from that institution in 1878, he went to Lecompton, Kansas, where, in the college chapel of what was once known as the Rowena Hotel of pro-slavery and border ruffian days, he was ordained, in 1881, by Bishop E. B. Kephart, three years after having been received into the conference by Bishop Milton Wright, the father of the inventors of the aeroplane.

After having been pastor of the college church at Lecompton for three years, he became for a short time pastor at Abilene. Here he was visited by a committee from the Chapman Congregational Church and accepted a call to become pastor at that place.

Nearly thirty-five years have elapsed since the writer entered the Congregational ministry. The

most of this period has been spent in Iowa. Before coming to Iowa, following the Chapman Church ministry, he had been pastor at McPherson, Fredonia, and Kansas City, Kansas. Since coming to Iowa he has been minister successively at Muscatine, Ames, Humboldt, and Farragut.

In the light of the foregoing facts it will be seen that, including his early pre-seminary attempts, the writer's ministry embraces the entire period of his religious life.

Into those years are interwoven experiences both happy and sad. These years brought memorable occasions; developed religious fellowships, precious beyond expression; revealed a type of noble manhood in the ministry, such as is not excelled on earth; which justifies the application to them of Christ's declaration in the book of Revelation, that they are the "stars" and "angels" of the churches.

It need hardly be said that among those who have affectionate place in the writer's heart, no higher position is given than is accorded to those who were instrumental in leading him to Christ. Most of them have long since passed to the Homeland "beyond the bridge." But at this date, Mr. Henry Myers, of Dublin, Indiana, whose persuasive word and constraining hand led me "to the altar," still abides on the hither side of Time.

In writing "The Caravans," the author could not divest himself of the consciousness that not many more years will be allotted to him as an active pastor, since anything like fulness of years discredits a minister in the estimation of the churches.

Under these circumstances the poem could hardly escape a certain mellow but persistent and pervasive loneliness and sadness, which the passing years, to some extent, must bring to all, and which only the Christian hope can dispel.

It is thus evident that this poem is frankly religious and, to some extent, personal, and is therefore characterized by occasional autobiographical references, although it is hoped that it is not effusively religious, nor offensively personal. It is written in the first person in order to secure the advantage of descriptive and emotional directness.

A word may be permitted concerning the structural form of the poem.

Poe's dictum is that there is no such thing as a long poem, and that where one seems to exist — like Paradise Lost — it seems so only because it is really made up of a series of short ones.

In accordance with this view, the structural device here adopted consists of a series of five-stanza paragraph poems, each measurably complete in itself and yet more or less closely related to the whole series.

Thus the reader can begin or cease at almost any point, according to his pleasure.

It may help to understand some of the references to the Kansas days — such, for example, as those that refer to the old trail, the hunting-companions, and the frontier friends, if it be known that the writer emigrated, with his mother's and honored stepfather's family, to Kansas, in the old "prairie schooner" way, in 1868, when he was yet a boy. After many years, the mother, then living in far off Arizona, answered

to the heavenly call; and her children from distant states received, at the little station, the casket containing her mortal form, and laid her away to rest by the side of him, her fellow-pilgrim, and in the midst of other kindred and Christian friends, who had long slept in the little Lecompton cemetery, not far away from the river Kaw.

In the meantime, two or three years after his first arrival in Kansas, the writer had returned to the old Indiana home of his father, who had died in the writer's infancy and who, by the side of my devout and venerable grandsire, now sleeps in the little jutting headland burial-garden, in the friendly shadow of the Locust Grove church, at the foot of whose hill-slope flows the bordering little river, as it has flowed for unnumbered centuries — a miniature symbol of the ageless River of Life.

It was at the time of this return to his grandfather's homestead in Indiana that the conversion noted in the beginning of this sketch occurred.

As a last word in this already too lengthy sketch, it may be said, without asserting any preëminent literary claim, but simply with a desire for fellowship, it is hoped that many of the writer's former parishioners, ministerial brethren, and old-time friends will in leisure moments, sometimes turn to these verses and thus for a little while join with him in looking at, or, in fancy and feeling, walking with, some of the caravans that pursue their pilgrimage in this little book.

H. D. H.

Farragut, Iowa

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PROEM

No lotus columned temple here,
  Where sphinxes line the paved approach
To awe with mystery and fear,
  Lest one irreverent encroach.

No cup of gold which jewels fill
  Unrosaried on golden thread,
Unstrung, unset, but priceless still
  And fit to crown a royal head.

No flaming tapestry of words,
  The weave of some prismatic mind,
For courtly dames and titled lords,
  Will here the friendly reader find.

A lowly chapel here invites,
  Whose windows plain show earth and sky,
And sunbeams serve as altar lights,
  And all are welcome who pass by.

Its tapestries are homespun rhymes,
  Its priest wears neither robe nor stole,
The cup-held gems he gives at times
  Are apples in a wooden bowl.

DEDICATION

Ye tenuous forms who dwell above,
  Whose faithful hearts have turned to clay,
Who live in God a life of love,
  To you I dedicate my lay; —

To you, likewise, who far abide,
  Whose forms nor faces can I see,
Who walk as shadows by my side,
  And are as spirits unto me; —

And you whose voices still I hear,
  And thrill to feel your living touch; —
You all, like saints, to me are dear;
  I canonize and crown you such.

By death or distance far removed,
  Perspective shows how bright you are;
Your value and your virtues proved,
  Each beams upon me like a star.

Dwell ye on earth or in the sky,
  A part of me have you become;
Your image dwells in memory's eye,
  And in my soul you have a home.

PROLOGUE — 1

The breath that through the pipes is blown
  Is one great soul of all the notes
That make the full-voiced organ tone,
  The harmony that upward floats.

Emotion's waves beat many shores,
  But yet it is the self-same sea;
The tides will moan, the breakers roar,
  From wheresoe'er the winds may be.

The angel of remembrance dwells
  Within the temple of each soul,
And Hope still rings the golden bells
  Whose chimes from shining steeples roll.

I tell my grief, I tell my joy,
  No matter whence they came to me;
If thou be woman, man, or boy,
  Both joy and grief have come to thee.

If love or loss I tell as mine
  Yourself have known e'en more complete,
Strike out my name and write in thine,
  But charge me not with self-conceit.

PROLOGUE — 2

But who am I to write my name
  In verse that other eyes should see,
And flaunt an egotistic claim
  For other ears to hark to me?

O hear me, friend, whoe'er thou art,
  I stand not as the Pharisee
In boastful pride from men apart,
  Nor clear of failings claim to be.

The sea homes in a water drop,
  The sun globes in a drop of dew,
A kernel holds the waving crop,
  And all things dwell in me — and you.

All hearts at source are just the same,
  And each to all the rest is kin;
One heart can light the rest with flame,
  Else we would die in hate and sin.

With love's dear right to plagiarize,
  Strike out the names of me and mine
From every verse before your eyes,
  And write the names of thee and thine.

PROLOGUE — 3

The watchman on the wall or tower,
  The lookout from the dizzy mast,
Scan land and sea and call the hour
  To all below, through calm and blast.

The poet scans the near and far,
  But sees he with the prophet mind;
At morning sun and evening star
  He tells his vision to mankind.

He tells it from the godlike heart
  That seeks for fellowship with all
Through scenes expressed in words of art
  That to our finer feelings call.

He opens wide the mystic gate
  To every living loving soul;
To all in high or humble state
  He offers still his written scroll.

Then read the verse with eye and lip,
  And write the names of thee and thine
Upon the scroll of fellowship
  Beside the names of me and mine.

PRAYER — OVERTURE

O Spirit, thou whose work is this —
  To show the heart the scenes forgot,
Bring back the long departed bliss
  That tempered once our human lot.

Bring back the days and faces dear
  That once we knew but know no more,
Bring back the past and make it clear,
  And lift the mist from Memory's shore.

O touch our eyes with vision powers,
  As thou didst touch the Patmos seer
In those apocalyptic hours
  Which brought the past and future near.

And cause to march before our eyes
  The pilgrim's bannered, endless train;
And let us see with glad surprise
  That Holy Land they hope to gain.

O lift us to the mystic height
  To view the world from sea to sea
And look on tented fields of light
  Where pilgrims spend Eternity.

PART I

SUNRISE AND THE WESTERN DOOR

SUNRISE AND THE WESTERN DOOR

I

I stood alone in Sunrise Land
  Upon a height with outlook free,
Before me spread a beach of sand,
  And, farther back, I saw the sea.

The Sun pushed up his flaming shield
  Above the over-mantling fogs,
And mists were lifted from the field
  And from the sea-marsh and the bogs.

And from the veil that night had spread
  Emerged a continent as fair
As any picture ever read
  That fancy painted in the air.

And gazing through the dim dawn-light,
  I saw come shoreward on a wave
Two wraith-like forms as fair and white
  As swans from out a coral cave.

And as they stepped upon the ground
  The rising mists above them whirled,
And rainbow fleeces wrapped them round,
  And man and woman found the world.

II

Companion forms, with joy elate,
  They forward came across the sand;
In pristine beauty's pure estate
  They faced their Eden, hand in hand.

And from the Deep, behind them flocked
  Creation's primal caravan,
And all the billows heaved and rocked
  And in the air a murmur ran —

"These are your kindred, one and all,
  But ye are something more than they,
Diviner voices to you call
  Than come to them by night or day.

"A life divine is in your breast,
  A mind is templed in your brain;
For you, a forward upward quest;
  For them, restraint of Nature's chain."

And so they passed the flowery gate,
  The sovereigns of an unmapped world,
To lead the way of birth and Fate
  Till Time's last towers be downward hurled.

III

On sunny slopes their garden lay,
  With lilied lakes and loitering streams,
And song birds singing all the day —
  A Paradise of peace and dreams.

Of peace and dreams; of nights and stars,
  And soothing silence brooding deep,
And musky odors from the flowers,
  And Nature wrapped in dewy sleep.

How bright the day, how soft the night —
  O that it thus could e'er endure;

A race e'er young in grace and might,
  In figure fair, in spirit pure.

O birth, O death; O love, O hate;
  O garden serpent creeping in;
O sin and sorrow at the gate,
  Death's caravan shall now begin.

O sad faced pair, the western door
  Stands open for your pilgrim feet;
The sunrise gate will ope no more,
  Go, hand in hand, your fate to meet.

NEW ANCESTRY AND NEW DAWN

IV

A caravan (led by those two)
  That faced toward the twilight west,
Approaching, through the ages grew,
  And passed below my eagle nest.

Some slow and solemn onward went
  To seek a far-off sacred shrine,
Some rode swift steeds, on battle bent,
  Some fainting fell outside the line.

Triumphant Roman chariots rolled,
  By proud-necked horses westward drawn;
And kings dethroned, and slaves, and gold
  Neath eagle standards all passed on.

But through the dust-obstructed view
  The eye could faintly still descry

The Roman, Persian, Greek and Jew,
The ear discern a Babel cry.

And, lo, the sun sank in the west,
Both moon and stars were all withdrawn;
The world in darkness seemed to rest,
Till one bright star proclaimed new dawn.

V

A sky all sackclothed by the night,
A sleeping world in troubled dreams;
The sackcloth torn by dawning light,
The world aroused by angel themes.

A new ancestral Adam born,
An Eden in a Syrian cave;
A child of glory and of scorn,
To suffer death from death to save.

His breath a breezze from groves of balm,
His eyes love-lighted lamps of flame,
His lips a harp, his voice a palsm,
His hands to bless and lift from shame.

A festal throng who shout him king,
A garden prayer — with face to ground,
A judge where foes false witness bring,
A prisoner scourged and thorn-wreath crowned.

A cross upreared his form receives,
While for his foes they hear him pray;
He yields his life between two thieves —
The sky all sackclothed at mid day.

VI

A sackclothed sun, an earth shock-torn,
  Graves open rent, death in retreat;
A new age from a dead age born,
  And man victorious in defeat.

Though kindred he to beasts on earth,
  Yet now who breathe immortal breath
Are sunset pilgrims, high in worth,
  And heirs of more than sin and death.

The Son of God and Son of Man,
  Ascended from his cross away,
Now leads the human caravan —
  A flame by night, a cloud by day.

A cross behind, a crown before,
  A cloud by day, a star by night,
The past lies dead on Time's sea shore
  And all the future shines with light.

Toward the sunset as before,
  The sunset caravan moves on,
Its earthly goal the sunset shore —
  But sunset now is Hope's new dawn.

VII

The past gone by and buried deep,
I see the Present's passing shows,
Where motley throngs or laugh or weep —
A human tide which onward flows.

An Amazon of human souls,
Which seeks the Deep from whence are we,
And onward with its wavelets rolls
To mingle with the timeless sea.

The timeless sea, where human waves,
That on life's river toss and foam,
Flow onward still beyond earth's graves
And find at last their harbor home.

And delta billows blend with theirs —
Fraternal spirits meet their own;
In answer to their sighs and prayers,
They enter not their port alone.

For this, for this, to God be praise;
He doth complete what Christ began;
When he the Son of God did raise,
In him he raised the sons of man.

VIII

He once who lived and once was dead
And is alive forevermore,
Our great forerunner gone ahead,
Keeps open house and open door:

Communal home in cloudland far,
  Imparadised in gardens fair,
Where all the saintly spirits are,
  The radiant dwellers of the air.

To some I knew have inward swung
  The pearly portals of the sky;
The earth-bells tolled, the heavenly rung —
  They passed to life, who seemed to die.

And since my years far pass three score,
  And come the half sad dreamy moods,
I seem to see them on the shore
  That hangs above the hills and woods.

I saw them in life's pilgrim train,
  Until their forms passed o'er the hill;
With longing eyes I gazed in vain —
  They come not, yet are with me still.

IX

They're with me still, as funeral flowers
  Make bright and fragrant all the room
Through slowly passing pensive hours,
  Though lies our sweetheart in the tomb.

Anew sometimes the heart must break,
  And eyes will fill with rush of tears,
When living memories awake
  And summon back the long gone years.

Long gone, I say, but say not dead, —
  One caravan wends o'er the land,

One marches in the air o'er-head
To bless but touch us not by hand.

Could one but tell how much we owe
To friends and years that long have passed,
What jeweled tokens we could show
That will not dim while time shall last.

O pilgrims who have passed from time,
I break upon your by-gone years
My alabaster vase of rhyme,
And bathe your memory with my tears.

OUR PILRIMAGE STARTS OUT FROM THERE

X

Thus standing on my vision height,
I did, and do, apostrophize
Those happy pilgrims of the light
Who've passed the gates of Paradise.

It may be but the senile mood,
From levied tax of tribute years,
But since they went, life, more subdued,
Finds earth, though good, has less that cheers.

"Has less that cheers?" And yet I know
Earth never had so much of cheer;
Reluctantly the heart lets go
Its heavenly spots located here.

But ah, these heavens in miniature,
Are they not beautiful as much

Because suggestions here endure
Of those whose presence made them such?

'Twas heaven in the upper room
What time the heavenly Christ was there;
And home and garden flowers bloom
Where once our friends and kindred were.

XI

I see processions climb the hill
Where Washington once lived and died;
I see them at his tomb stand still,
And rich and poor stand side by side.

I see them neath the colonnade
Into his stately mansion pass;
The great life here has sacred made
The house, the garden, trees and grass.

But doves coo o'er their nest of sticks,
And swallows cling to nests of mud;
Not stately homes of boards or bricks
Alone draw love o'er fire and flood.

And Lincoln's log-built, mud-chinked hut
Is sacred to the pilgrim throng
As is the shaft by chisels cut
To mark his tomb for centuries long.

Somewhat of God comes in each one,
And innocence and virtue fair
Make every home a heaven begun —
Our pilgrimage starts out from there.

XII

And thou, my Country, great and fair,
  Proud mother of a noble race,
Thou bendest with a mother's care
  O'er all oppressed in every place.

Blest by thy freedom-loving heart,
  By millions go thy fearless sons
To take their place and bear their part
  In driving back the fiendish Huns.

And millions more both work and pray
  In church and state, school, field and mill,
And all thy daughters, night and day,
  Give woman's ministry and skill.

Around the brutish neck of war
  Earth's millstone-curse thy sons will tie,
In Time's dead sea to sink him far,
  Where armor clad his corpse shall lie.

Then Peace o'er earth shall wave her wand,
  When tyranny is downward hurled;
And thou, Columbia, shall stand,
  Thy flag saluted by the world.

PART II

HISTORICAL EPISODE

THE CHILDREN'S CARAVAN KNOWN AS THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

HISTORICAL EPISODE

THE CHILDREN'S CARAVAN

XIII

I saw them come, I saw them pass,
  I saw them vanish east and west —
Children small, and lad and lass,
  And infants on the mother's breast.

The little brothers of our Lord
  By Herod's infant-hunters slain;
The white souled martyrs of the sword,
  They led the infant martyr train.

. . . . . .

At last from France and Rhineland fair
  I saw the children in crusade
March on with banners in the air
  To seek the land where Christ was laid.

Across the Alps I saw them go
  And fall by hundreds every day,
To find their graves beneath the snow
  Or be by torrents swept away.

They could not reach the Savior's tomb,
  Nor offer there the pilgrim's prayer;
They found him not within the gloom
  But met his spirit in the air.

XIV

They met the Savior in the air,
  But left behind a trail of graves,
And thousands but survived to share
  A seaweed couch beneath the waves.

O white winged ships of fair Marseilles,
  O masters who controlled their prows,
How could you hear the children's wails
  And trample down the children's vows?

O priests who in the name of God
  Stood on the ships at break of day
And led the chant or low or loud,
  Ye with the children sailed away.

O merchants with the Judas heart,
  Who feigned the port was Palestine,
Ye sold for slaves, with lying art,
  The children of the Seine and Rhine.

Ye thousands doomed no more to see
  The tomb of Christ nor home again;
But gulfing waves, more kind than ye,
  Saved hundreds from the Saracen.

XV

Death freed the children, but not all,
  For sail-torn ships escaped the rocks
And brought their slaves to mart and hall,
  In spite of storm and breaker-shocks.

O children bound in Moslem lands,
With tear-stained faces upward turned
I saw you clasp your pleading hands
And pray the prayers from sorrow learned.

I saw you from your comrades torn,
With weary feet and faces sad,
To follow merchants camel borne,
From Egypt's shore to far Bagdad.

You passed in chains through Palestine
And saw the dome above Christ's grave,
His olive grove and trellised vine,
And mound whereon his life he gave.

You walked along the doleful way
Where Christ had borne his cross before,
Passed out the gate at break of day,
And saw Jerusalem no more.

XVI

O boys and girls, O lad and lass,
O passing caravan of youth,
I see your waning company pass
And bless you for your faith and truth.

O not for you Damascus lures,
Euphrates, nor the Tigrus flood;
No spice nor balm home-sickness cures;
It deeper goes than heart and blood.

Where Hebrew children could not sing,
No more could ye from Seine and Rhine;

Nor bribe nor sword from you could wring
  Your home-land faith at Bagdad's shrine.

By arrows pierced or whelmed in flood,
  Ye joined the children's martyr band;
Through death you found your way to God,
  Crusaders to his Holy Land.

. . . . . .

The Saracen has passed away
  But not the crescent and the cross;
Ten thousand children march today
  To slavery, grief, and hearthstone loss.

EPILOGUE

WHY WRITE THESE LINES

XVII

But some will say, "Why write these rhymes
  For child crusaders long ago?
We live in newer, better times
  And shield our homes from every foe."

Still, looking from my vision height
  Upon the present's caravan,
I see both changes great and slight —
  Much change in thing, less change in man.

I see the children in the marts,
  I see them sold as factory slaves;
Both lad and lass by blackest arts
  Are plunged beneath the dead sea waves.

The Herod spirit still survives
  And takes with daggers all our own
Christ's little brothers' helpless lives
  In ways by ancients never known.

The children have no monument,
  No arch of triumph spans their grave,
Though Christ for children, too, was sent
  And took them in his arms to save.

XVIII

"No monument?" 'Tis yes and no;
  Ten thousand schools proclaim their worth,
Ten thousand churches where they go,
  Ten thousand homes that gave them birth.

. . . . . .

On far San Pedro's wave washed isle,
  Where once the fishers spread their tents,
And Mediterranean wavelets smile,
  Stood once the church of the Innocents.

From prison decks of crusade ships
  That sank to curse the sea no more,
With eyes now closed and silent lips,
  Sweet children's forms were washed ashore.

They laid them all away to rest,
  And church and altar o'er them built;
With stainless hands across each breast,
  They sleep absolved from sin and guilt.

There came the pilgrims, long ago,
  To worship at the children's shrine; —

Each home such altar has, I know,
  You bow at yours, I bow at mine.

XIX

O Rachel, — thou who once did weep
  O'er Hebrew children, Herod-slain —
And Matron Browning, rise and sweep
  Your tear-wet plaintive harps again.

Across the narrow strip of sea,
  Like sea waves beating on the shore,
The children wail and sob their plea
  Above the shotted cannon's roar.

Some stretch to us their pleading hands,
  Some lift their handless arms on high;
Across the seas from far off lands
  War-orphaned children starving cry.

Oh, wolf-torn lands, we hear you bleat,
  Unshepherded we see you roam,
With baffled eyes and bleeding feet,
  To seek in vain your shattered home.

But great Columbia hears your plea
  And sends her caravan of ships,
Like loaded camels of the sea,
  With clothes, and food for baby lips.

PART III

THE CARAVANS RESUMED

EACH GENERATION HAS ITS DAY

THE CARAVANS — RESUMED

EACH GENERATION HAS ITS DAY

XX

Columbus sought and found a world
  Beyond the billow-broken sea,
Where Freedom's flag should be unfurled
  And all beneath its folds be free.

And in his wake the Pilgrims came,
  Defying Ocean in a bark
Frail as the flower that gave it name,
  But dear to God as Noah's ark.

They passed from ship o'er Plymouth's rock,
  And gave to it a magic name;
A corner stone, it stands each shock —
  Bears walls that hands of Freedom frame.

From every land since then they come,
  And all our shores are Plymouth rock;
Here Freedom smiles on every home
  Secure, while thrones together knock.

And pilgrim's sons now ship-borne go
  To pay our more than century debt,
Which new-world strength and honor owe
  To Liberty and Lafayette.

XXI

Each generation has its day —
  Battalioned ranks they come — and go,
And children pickets lead the way
  Through light and darkness, joy and woe.

They fall before remorseless ills,
  Like front rank soldiers swept by fire
Of foes behind the rocks and hills,
  Where scalp lock savages retire.

Alas for babes; again alas,
  For him the child of eighty years;
The toddler and the totterer pass,
  Both easy victims for the Shears.

I've seen it all and felt it more —
  A little son by fever slain;
And near the wood-fringed river shore,
  A little grave on a Kansas plain.

A youthful sire whose form is dust,
  And by his side a grandsire gray;
Extremes of life, I can but trust
  Through sunset gates they found the day.

XXII

A mother dead in an arid land,
  Where Arizona mesas rise
And cast their shadows on the sand,
  Their cliffs outlined against the skies.

A casket in a baggage car,
  A daughter convoy on the train,
Borne mile on mile and hour by hour
  O'er mountain pass and sage-brush plain.

A word flashed North along the wire,
  A son's heart pierced at a pulpit gate;
A funeral call from a tongue of fire,
  To children in a Southern state.

From north and south and east and west,
  By some unseen magnetic law,
The steam trailed coaches without rest
  Converging toward the river Kaw.

And thence the little caravan
  The casket followed to its bed; —
With tears and prayers and chanted psalm,
  We left her with her kindred dead.

XXIII

With father, mother, grandsire gone
  And one seraphic star-bright son,
And other kindred passing on,
  They break my heart-strings one by one.

Where is the circle once I knew,
  Fair flowers now scattered wide apart,
Which in my fragrant garden grew
  Around the fountain of my heart.

The flowers are gone and winter here,
  The fountain jet to ice congeals,

And all around is bleak and drear,
  But deep the fount no winter feels.

The flowers are blooming otherwhere,
  And gladdening with their heavenly arts
Some garden spot in summer air,
  Refreshed by other fountain hearts.

Thank God; and still I feel regret —
  A jealous feeling that life's plot
Denies to me their presence yet —
  And wonder if I am forgot.

XXIV

"Forgot;" how awesome is that word;
  The cross-domed One confessed its dread;
"Remember me," said Christ the Lord,
  "With blood of grape and broken bread."

Such sacramental fellowships
  Within the upper room we hold,
When loving eyes and voiceless lips
  Return and greet us as of old.

We drink the wine of memory
  Which hands from unseen flagons pour;
The inner senses seem to see
  The guests we loved and lost of yore.

We break and share the bread of lives
  That fed us from their hand and heart,
The essence of themselves survives,
  We banquet on their better part.

To know that I should thus live on
In hearts of friends upon the earth,
When from the world my form is gone,
Were happiness beyond all worth.

THE FACE, THE CROWD, AND THE HONOR ROLL

XXV

How is it that where hundreds walk,
One face from all the crowds that pass,
One voice from all the roar of talk,
Quick love can pick from all the mass?

On by my high reviewing stand
The slow unending column streams;
Sometimes one waves a friendly hand,
A well known face out brightly beams.

Then thrills my heart with music sweet,
Emotions wake that long had slept,
And soft refrains themselves repeat
From magic chords by Memory swept.

There dark-eyed Kate from out the throng,
And Madge and Belle, of Kansas days,
Look up and smile and pass along
The trail where camp fires used to blaze.

A group of hunters, too, walk there,
My frontier friends, with gun and hounds,
With whom the hunt I used to share
In woods whose bends the river bounds.

XXVI

Sometimes the charm a letter weaves
  Unlocks the caverns dark and fast
Where forty years, like forty thieves,
  Have hid the treasures of the past.

I open up the cabinet
  Wherein the precious packet lies;
The day is done, the sun is set,
  And o'er the earth the darkened skies.

The study lamp sends out its glow,
  The winds around the dwelling moan;
I read the letters; hours may go,
  I know it not; I'm not alone.

When I unfold the written page,
  The writer's soul incarnate there,
From paper white or brown with age,
  Comes forth itself with me to share.

Each letter is a magic tent
  Enclosing scenes and comrades gone;
They here return on kindness bent; —
  I fold the tent and all pass on.

XXVII

If I the honor roll should call
  Of all I know and all I love,
Their names like music notes would fall
  Soft as the wood-notes of the dove.

Whole groups from sacred spots would rise
  Like coveys up from flowery coves,
And some bright-winged would cleave the skies,
  From heaven's mystic fronded groves.

New Garden, Dublin, Richmond town —
  Each one a sacred Hoosier name;
They shine illustrious with renown
  More dear to me than worldly fame.

They were the homes whence came the friends
  Who in my heart, in school-boy days,
Dropt that sweet branch that outward sends
  The sweetened streams along my ways.

I call the roll and all respond,
  A shining circle without strife;
Of each and all divinely fond,
  I write them in my book of life.

XXVIII

And fair to me is Dayton town,
  Where once Miami's swelling tide
With broadening terror sweeping down,
  Raged like a sea on every side.

I see the houses swept along,
  I hear the helpless pray and cry;
Upon the heights I see the throng
  Stretch out beneath the sullen sky.

The flood subsides, its fury spent,
  A ruined Venice seems the town,

And many home in shack and tent,
  And many in the deep went down.

But high above the ravaged shore
  Still stand the consecrated halls
Where once I learned the sacred lore
  Then taught within those honored walls.

My gospel comrades from those doors
  Salute me, smile, and then are gone;
Somewhere, in town or on far shores,
  They lead the white-cross cohorts on.

XXIX

"My gospel comrades;" — words to me
  Which, — as the ring that, rubbed or pressed,
Brought unseen forms from air or sea —
  Recall bright ranks in beauty dressed.

There white-robed children lily fair,
  Whom mothers laid in Jesus' arms,
And I baptized with christening prayer,
  Walk fair with childhood's trusting charms.

There youth and maid in strength and grace,
  And men and matrons chaste and true,
With prayer in heart and lifted face,
  Take up each day their march anew.

These were my comrades, one and all, —
  The flocks I led in Jesus' name;
I drew them with the gospel call, —
  They heard, they yielded, and they came.

How bright they shine through clouds of dust,
The glory of life's caravan —
These pilgrims of obedient trust,
Both babe and mother, youth and man.

THE CALL AND THE OLD LECOMPTON DAYS

XXX

When first I heard the inner call
To put the trumpet to my lips,
A shadow on me seemed to fall
As if the sun hid in eclipse.

Some, when they knew, felt mild surprise,
Some stood aloof, or thought me fool,
Some viewed me with approving eyes,
Some stung me deep with ridicule.

When first in church I tried to pray
And from the pulpit preach the word,
Abashed, I failed and slipped away,
My heart a lonely wounded bird.

But when, through study, trials, and tears,
Revealing failures slowly passed,
Diminishing with going years,
A chastened triumph came at last.

And then, when emigrants of hope
Marched with me 'neath Christ's oriflame,
Where e'er I led, o'er vale or slope,
It healed the scorn and pulpit shame.

XXXI

O since the old Lecompton days,
When Kansas bled in feuds and strife,
What miracles, in freedom's ways,
Have healed a warring nation's life.

There stood in view the crumbling walls
Of old secession's bloody times,
Transformed at last to college halls
Where strikes the bell the study chimes.

Where force and fraud and freedom fought
Stands yet old "Constitution Hall,"
On Time's rough reef a slave ship caught
Where slavery's tide began to fall.

Within the old hotel of stone
Where ruffian statesmen used to dwell,
The great room now to chapel grown,
On me the prophet's mantle fell.

There came the pastors from afar,
A caravan as to a shrine;
And ordination in that hour
Upon me laid the task divine.

XXXII

And since the day ordaining hands
Upon my head with prayer were laid,
On shore and sea and foreign lands
The gospel guidon I've displayed.

On Kansas plains, in Iowa,
In schoolhouse, church, and grove and tent,
Through passing years, by night and day
To word and work my powers were bent.

In towns and cities far away
I've heralded the heavenly call,
From Boston down to Florida,
To rich and poor and great and small.

I tell it o'er in glad review,
And not in pride or foolish boast;
The highest joy one ever knew
Is preaching in the Holy Ghost.

And sweetest of all sweetest things,
God's love to voice to eager ears
In boyhood's home, where memory clings
To friends and mates of early years.

XXXIII

Those "early years;" did I not say
"The past is dead and buried deep,"
And so dismiss it from my lay?
Not dead are they, they only sleep.

They wake, and from the shadow world
They bring again life's morning new,
When flowery banners spring unfurled,
And freshened earth with sparkling dew.

Not even death, the marshal grim,
Can hold dear friends from my embrace;

As friends of Lazarus did to him,
I take the napkin from each face.

They come as choral spirit bands,
They sing to me the sweet old songs,
They circle me with love-linked hands,
And all my being upward longs.

Ah, then my soul cathedral turns,
The sweet low chant each dim arch fills;
Each altar taper softly burns,
And wordless music soothes my ills.

FROM FOND RESTRAINTS OF HOME RELEASED

XXXIV

I cannot bring myself to lay
The poet's rhythmic scroll aside;
So much the heart would like to say,
So poor the verse already tried.

Conventions so our actions mould
And domineer o'er sense and art,
That dearest things cannot be told,
Since fashion makes us hide the heart.

But who that knows the joys of home,
The god-like in parental cares —
Brought by the children — elf and gnome,
But somewhat that is heavenly shares?

The eager circle round the board,
The heads all bowed, the blessing asked —

Ten thousand things does memory hoard,
  Forgetting all that tried or tasked.

Girls grow to women, boy to man,
  And love and duty claim their own;
The children join life's caravan,
  And we at table sit alone.

XXXV

The children join the caravan,
  We look with pride, we look with fear;
We go with them far as we can,
  We give them prayer, we give them cheer.

From fond restraints of home released,
  The toys abjured, the school days done,
The bridal wreath, the wedding feast, —
  And so they leave us, one by one.

We wrap the lunch with careful art,
  Of jest and smile we wear the mask,
The rice is thrown when they depart,
  And we resume our lonely task.

The years roll on, and they return,
  With furloughs for the holidays;
They bring their children, and we burn
  The Christmas lights, and join their plays.

The Christmas tree now stript and bare,
  The furlough days and guests pass on;
The tree stands by the window there,
  But lights and laughter all are gone.

XXXVI

I count of values mostly two
In all the assets earth has piled;
Of all the wealth time ever knew,
The best is parent and the child.

In them incorporate are found
All powers and potencies that rise
In bonds of life by which we're bound
In fellowship with earth and skies.

Not angels white of carven stone,
Or monoliths of strength and grace;
Not as wing'd seraphs round the throne,
Are we who wear the human face.

Though each is individual flame
From God the primal source and sun,
We pass our nature with our name,
And birth and blood proclaim us one.

And all we know of God through love
Is imaged in the human home;
What home is here, is heaven above;
Our Father there would have us come.

THE SHUDDERING LOOK AND THE VISION BRIGHT

XXXVII

I cast a long and shuddering look
On views beyond my vision hill,
A panorama picture book
Whose scenes the heart with horror thrill.

I sweep horizon with my glass,
And rolling clouds ablaze with fire,
Where storm battalions march and mass,
Shake all the world with thunders dire.

The air-plane condors soar in air,
And spectral airships cleave the sky;
Ships from the sea the cruisers scare,
And sub-sea sharks beneath it ply.

The war curse rests on nations all,
Earth yawns with open dragon jaws,
Like stars the deadly meteors fall,
And scorned is God's and human laws.

Pale ghosts by millions Fancy scans,
From death-filled trenches rising free;
Oh, when did such vast caravans
E'er pour into Eternity?

XXXVIII

How is it that when death draws near
Both good and evil then unvail,
And show to us in image clear
The scenes that cheer or make us quail?

The patriarch, with eyes grown dim,
Sees truer than his statesman son;
The past its meaning shows to him;
The future, where its course will run.

And Joseph and his brothers all,
From prophet lips that peal or toll,

Hear words that gladden or appal
  Speak from their dying father's soul.

So come to me the closing years, —
  Regrets for failures make me sigh,
Life's meaning to my vision clears,
  I watch in hope the sunset die.

I sit with Christ on Olivet,
  And hear of wars and rumored wars,
But know that right will triumph yet,
  Sustained by all the heavenly Powers.

XXXIX

The seer and prophet mood I feel
  Whenever near to Christ I draw;
He is the sun, and round him wheel
  All worlds obedient to his law.

I see the high far-centered throne
  With circling steps of terraced light
And clouds whose mysteries unknown
  Eternity will bring to sight.

There God, concentered, reigns in Christ,
  As God, diffused, in boundless space;
To all by mercy there enticed
  The Father shows his shining face.

To that uplifted central throne
  Come all the caravans of time;
With steps that beat in undertone,
  To it they stream from every clime.

There good is crowned and robed in light,
And ill to darkness banished far;
Thence bat and dragon take their flight,
But every soul shines like a star.

TO EVERY POET, PROPHET, SEER

XL

To every poet, prophet, seer
An inner voice speaks harsh or kind
A mandate that the soul must hear,
And heard, it may not be declined.

The glorious Brothers side by side,
By signs and portents helped of God,
O'er Egypt's turbid river wide
Stretched forth the all-subduing rod.

They led through seas that barred the way
A race whose thanks were sins and gibes;
With law and altar conquered they,
And built a nation out of tribes.

But came the Voice that calls the years;
And climbing up the mountain side,
With downward gaze undimmed by tears,
The Priest surveys the camp spread wide.

They strip him of his garments bright,
Another wears the robes he wore,
They close his eyes — and it is night;
He sleeps for aye on lone Mount Hor.

XLI

And thou, the giver of the Law,
Whose precepts rule each godly race,
Who stood on Sinai with awe,
While God spoke with thee face to face —

Thou, too, hast heard the trumpet's blast,
Blown by the unseen angel's breath;
With farewell ode and blessing past,
Climb thou the mountain to thy death.

There on Mount Nebo's shoulder stand,
With fearless heart and eagle eye;
From sea to sea behold the land,
And then lie down alone to die.

The rod, the symbol of thy power,
Has passed from thine to younger hands;
To priest and prophet comes the hour
When abdication Time demands.

Sleep on, ye mighty brothers dead,
Each pastor reads his fate in yours;
He leads no more where once he led,
A grave unknown his death secures.

XLII

And so I read and lay to heart
The lesson of the written years;
The present and the past depart,
I face the future as it nears.

I look with Aaron o'er the camp
Upon the tents of ancient days,

And hear the races as they tramp
  Along the desert's scorching ways.

I stand with Moses on the height
  And view beyond the Jordan stream
The promised land all bathed in light —
  That vision of the prophet's dream.

Toward one center and one law
  I see life's caravan approach;
Near to the Holy Land they draw
  And on its boundary flood enroach.

New priests and statesmen lead the way,
  With sacred ark of love and law;
The Dead Sea river's flood they stay,
  And reach the land the prophets saw.

BEYOND THE GATES OF HERCULES

XLIII

Where hosts in right and freedom stand,
  Here in the realm of time and sense,
They make the earth a holy land —
  But they themselves must journey hence.

Past palmy vales that wide expand,
  O'er sun-lit hills where flocks are free,
Beyond fair Sharon's flowery strand,
  Spreads out the sunset Western Sea.

And o'er this mystic ocean wide
  Go forth the ships forevermore;
At eve when falls the outward tide,
  They leave behind the Old World shore.

Beyond the gates of Hercules,
Below horizon's billowy rim,
A land by faith the sailor sees
And sun and stars are guides for him.

There stately ships from every land
Bring immigrants to find their rest;
Where blessings beam on every hand,
They anchor drop, and all are blest.

XLIV

Tis thus in parables I speak,
And picture Heaven in terms of earth;
Paths upward lead for all who seek,
From every land that gave them birth.

Each path convergent finds the road
Where march in endless caravan
God's pilgrims all, with staff and load —
Both maid and matron, boy and man.

And there I march, still keeping pace
With living comrades at my side,
While some in rank still keep their place,
From me though separated wide.

There, when I march with cheerless heart,
Oft shadowy forms of those I knew
Console me with their heavenly art,
Though they have passed from earthly view.

I near the day when in the air
From flesh to spirit pilgrims change,
And greet the friends that wait them there,
Where none are sad and none are strange..

XLV

FINALE

Farewell, farewell, ye loved ones all,
  And all the spots so bright and dear,
And fond illusions which enthrall,
  And all the ties that hold me here.

Farewell my mother's flowery cot
  With lilacs and with roses bowered,
Farewell the village burial plot
  Where o'er my kin my tears were showered.

Farewell my playmates, sent of God,
  Companions of my games and sport,
And ye — like autumn goldenrod —
  Who later grew into my heart.

Farewell my foes, if such there be —
  I say it with forgiving heart;
Thou, Lord, dost know both them and me —
  Of mercy grant us both a part.

Such farewell prayer and words I say
  And know them poor to what I feel;
May they be read when I'm away
  Where woe has changed to heavenly weal.

AFTER-THOUGHT

As one who lingers at the gate
With heart-deep thoughts he yet would tell,
Although he knows the hour is late,
I linger who have said farewell.

What faces look upon me still,
And smite me with their wistful gaze,
And with remorse my feelings fill
That verse of mine omits their praise.

From harmonies within my heart,
Soft as the hum of summer days,
And feelings all too fine for art,
For you a silent hymn I raise.

At night with brooding, shielding prayer
When storms are black, or stars are bright,
I home you in the Father's care,
Whose gaurds for you are angels white.

Farewell, then, kin and nameless friends,
Farewell — e'en though I antedate;
When consciousness with darkness blends,
To try to speak were then too late.

PRAYER — RECESSIONAL

O thou who art the Lord of life,
  Thou too art Lord o'er sullen death;
But sight and faith are still at strife —
  We take our measuure by our breath.

Both birth and death from out their urns
  Pour ever forth their mingling streams;
Life's crystal flood to blackness turns
  By death's beclouded — so it seems.

The rippling smiles on beauty's face
  To wrinkles turn on sorrow's cheek;
Each night-scene leaves its darkened trace,
  And summers yield to winters bleak.

We come through viewless crystal gates,
  Through gates of ebony depart,
And Christian faith or heathen Fates
  Inspire or paralyze the heart.

O show to us the gates of light,
  That cloud-hid city of the air,
Its rainbow throne with glory bright,
  And Him who reigns forever there.

RECESSIONAL — AMEN

O Son of Man, yet Son of God,
  Who rose transcendent to the skies,
Our very selves beyond the sod
  Show us through spirit quickened eyes.

Make faith serene and fancy sane,
  And win the will to purpose high,
And draw the heart from idols vain
  To things above the things that die.

Contrast for us through fancy clean
  The earthly and the heavenly state;
Let faith believe what there is seen
  And triumph over fear and hate.

Compare the garments of the saints
  With pilgrim-robes which once they wore,
That we may soften our complaints
  And march e'en though our feet be sore.

Oh! through celestial imagery
  Disclose the shining saintly soul,
The deep divine felicity
  That waits us at the heavenly goal.

TILL FOR THINE OWN THOU COME AGAIN,
THIS BE OUR PRAYER, O CHRIST, — AMEN.

RETROSPECT

I stood alone in Sunrise Land
  And, like the island prophet, saw
World-visions rise o'er sea and sand,
  And sweet and gall, and joy and awe
Within my soul were interblended,
While tears and sighs with smiles contended.

Through many days of wintery storms
  And nights when other tasks were done,
Came filmy shades and spirit forms
  In shining groups or one by one,
Where Memory's hearth was brightly blazing
To cheer the thoughts that I was phrasing.

Each cast a sprig of fragrant pine
  Upon the glowing bosom coals,
And spoke sweet words that quickened mine,
  As priests intone when upward rolls
The incense cloud the arches filling,
The sense and soul with worship thrilling.

When to some miner's snowy hut
  Come winter tourists, once his friends,
He piles on fuel — summer cut,
  And light and warmth the fireplace lends,
And soon from roof neath which they're biding
They hear the snow come downward sliding.

So what I saw in Sunrise Land
  I wrote in sunset winter hours,
When snow was sown by winter's hand
  And gone were summer birds and flowers;
But warmed by friends who came to cheer it,
Both cold and care slipped from my spirit.

PROSPECT

I stood at first in Sunrise Land,
  But wrote the record in the dusk;
I look toward the sunset strand,
  Discarding pomp and mask and husk;
Each birthday comes its tribute taking,
Its warning summons kindly breaking.

Mozart his requiem wrote, and I
  Am not oblivious to the Voice —
"All flesh is grass," I hear it cry,
  I hear it and in heart rejoice;
I look not down with dark surmising,
But feel my spirit upward rising.

Now comes again the Easter-tide,
  Preceded by our Lenten tears;
Again I mourn my wanderings wide
  And what was wasted of my years;
But all my life in Life enfolded,
I upward look by faith embolded.

I break the bread, I drink the wine
  Of self-imparting suffering Grace,
Observe the love-memorial sign,
  And with the Master turn my face
To meet death's traitor-kiss and warden
And share Messiah's grave and garden.

But evening time shall bring the light,
  And dusk of death shall turn to day,

And holy caravans in white
  Shall walk with Christ the cloud-paved way,
With waving palms and anthems blending,
To God's pure city high ascending.

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